

Department of Correction

Testimony of Leo C. Arnone, Commissioner

Judiciary Committee

Raised Bill No. 955, *An Act Concerning Inmate Discharge Savings Accounts*

February 23, 2011

Good afternoon, Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Leo Arnone, Commissioner of the Department of Correction (DOC). I am here this afternoon to speak in support of Raised Bill No. 955, *An Act Concerning Discharge Savings Accounts*.

Raised Bill No. 955 would make changes that are needed to effectively implement the inmate discharge savings legislation passed in 2007, which requires the DOC to set aside up to 10 percent of all money credited to an inmate's account to establish a savings fund that would be available to the inmate upon release to aid in reentry to the community. Once the legislation passed and staff began to work towards implementing its provisions, we recognized the need for some technical revisions and clarification. Our proposed changes generally keep the implementation of Discharge Savings consistent with the Cost of Incarceration provisions.

Among the revisions and clarifications being sought, the bill would limit the requirement to accumulate discharge savings to sentenced inmates only and exempt inmates sentenced in this state but confined in another state and specify that inmates contribute to inmate discharge savings accounts after most other statutory disbursements are satisfied. Statutory disbursements include payment of taxes, child support and court. Additionally, the bill would also clarify that the DOC does not maintain individual bank accounts for each inmate. The DOC deposits funds to a bank account or an account that the state treasurer administers and maintains individual internal accountings of each inmate's funds.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this matter.